

IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-23 (Canceled).

24. (Currently amended) A guidewire comprising:

an elongated core member having a proximal section and a distal section with a plurality of radiopaque markers disposed thereon at regular intervals in axial position and a longitudinal portion which tapers distally to a reduced transverse dimension wherein the taper creates a substantially linear change in stiffness of the core member over a length thereof;

a flexible body member disposed about the distal section of the elongate core member; and

a polymer layer disposed about at least a portion of the distal section of the elongate core member and the flexible body member.

25. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the polymer layer is selected from a group consisting of polyurethanes, polyamide, copolymers of polyurethane and copolymers of polyamide.

26. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the polymer layer has a substantially constant outer diameter.

27. (Canceled).

28. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the longitudinal portion has a length of about 5 to about 25 cm.

29. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the longitudinal portion has a curvilinear taper over a length thereof.

30. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the radiopaque markers are made of a radiopaque metal secured to the distal section of the elongate core member.

31. (Original) The guidewire of claim 30 wherein the radiopaque metal for the radiopaque markers is selected from the group consisting of gold, platinum, platinum-iridium, tantalum and tungsten.

32. (Original) The guidewire of claim 24 wherein the markers are made of a radiopaque matrix applied to the distal section of the elongate core member.

33. (Original) The guidewire of claim 32 wherein the radiopaque matrix comprises a radiolucent polymer doped with a radiopaque material.

34. (Canceled).

35. (Canceled).

36. (Original) The guidewire of claim 33 wherein the radiolucent polymer comprises polyurethane.

37. (Original) The guidewire of claim 33 wherein the radiopaque material comprises tungsten powder.

38-58 (Canceled).

59-85 (Canceled).

86. (New) A guidewire comprising:

an elongated core member having a proximal section and a distal section with a plurality of radiopaque markers disposed thereon at regular intervals in axial position and a longitudinal portion which tapers distally to a reduced transverse dimension wherein the taper creates a substantially linear change in stiffness of the core member over a length thereof;

a helical coil disposed about the distal section of the elongate core member; and
a polymer layer disposed about at least a portion of the distal section of the
elongate core member and at least partially enveloping the helical coil, wherein the
polymer layer has a substantially constant outer diameter.